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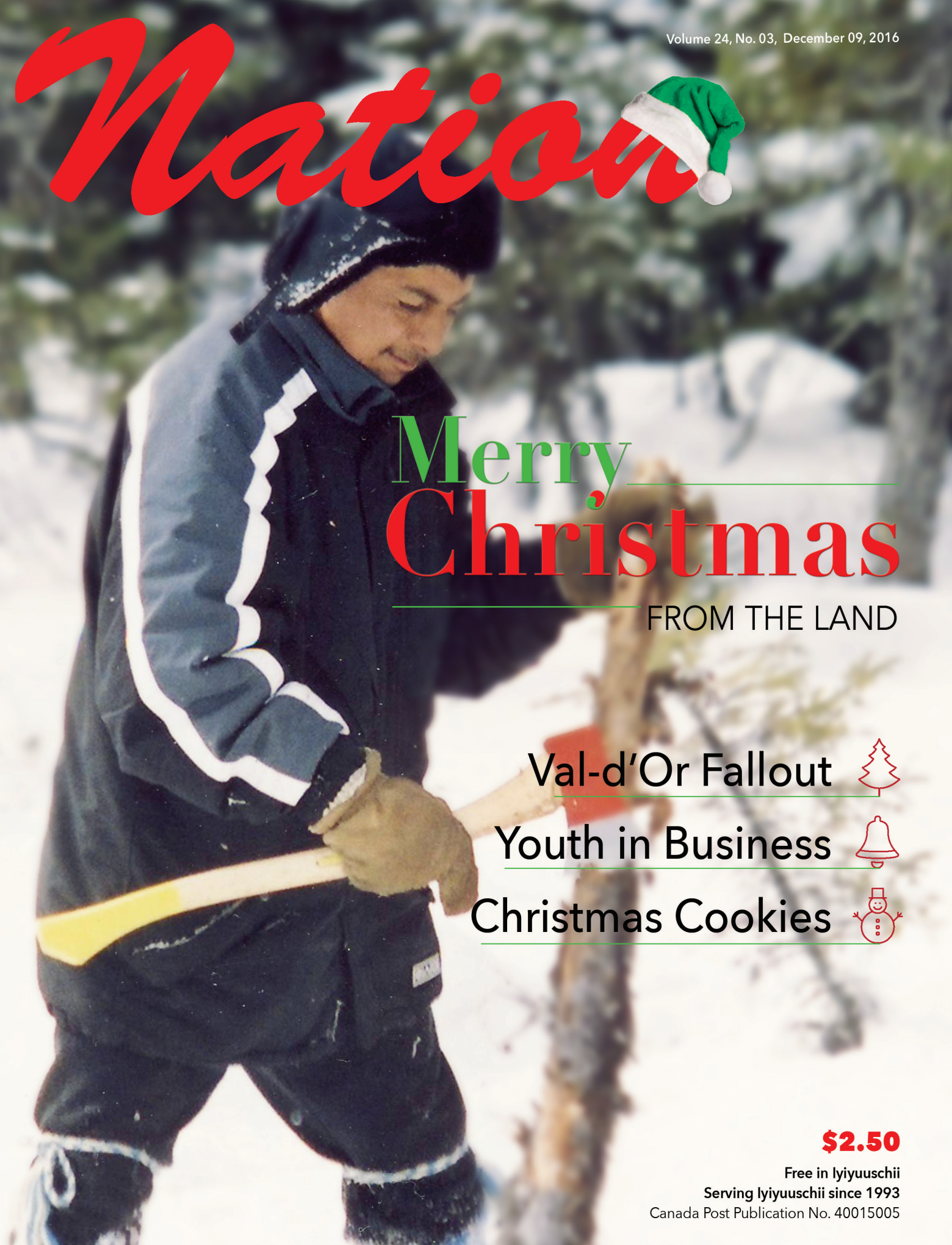
Nation



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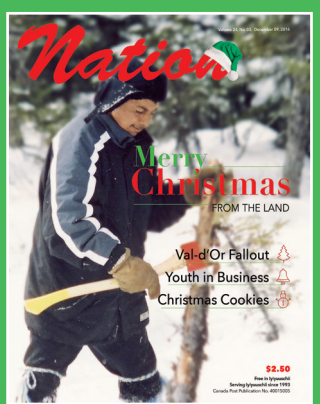

Photo by Will Nicholls

Editorial

Merry **Xmas**

by Will Nicholls

This holiday editorial may seem familiar, but that's because its message is always needed.

Whoever you may be, no matter what you have done, whatever the pain in your life right now or whatever circumstances surround you, look around and see what is giving you laughter and hope. You are not alone and you are loved. Your life is precious and if you open up, others will share. That is part of this time of year and it just takes that one step.

Then there are those who are more fortunate than others. I ask you to remember our Cree tradition of sharing. At this time of year more than any other, make an effort to be a person your ancestors would be proud of. It can be a random smile, a joke in passing, a contribution to the local food bank, presents for children and families having a hard time or simply a friendly nod of approval to boost someone's spirit. Hopefully you'll do all of the above.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from all of *the Nation* staff!

The holidays are a time of joy and laughter and the Creator wants us to show our love unconditionally. It's a time to enjoy life and to help others do the same. It is not a time to judge others – we do that too often the rest of the year. This season is the occasion where you can share the joy and laughter that changed your life and may change others.

So Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from all of *the Nation* staff. Be safe, give generously to local food banks and to those who have less than we do. Don't drink and drive and make peace on Earth part of your community's holidays.

Cold Dakota **Nights**

by Harry Joseph Benedict

North Dakota winter is officially here with fluctuations of high winds and snowdrifts. Saw a bunch of cars in the ditch last night. Luckily enough the majority of them got pulled out. I had been riding with an Elder when a cop stopped in the left lane across from a car in front of us. She hit the brakes and we slid perfectly between them. Fortunate enough no one got hit.

The cop scolded her lightly. "When my lights are on that means stop." She explained that she had tried and he was courteous enough to follow behind her to make sure that we were safe.

It gets cold at night but it's manageable for the most part if you have some decent layers. The night before I had slept in a tent after I thought I had space in a teepee and the floor got soaked from rain and snow... Heater didn't make much difference, so I slept in the kitchen area that night.

First night was solo, second night more got together. So now we're just gonna' be chopping wood here and there throughout the day. Honestly, I like this lifestyle. There's more of a sense of community for the most part. I've been given time to reflect on a lot of things and with each hurdle I find some aspect of healing and growth. It's a beautiful journey.

Give the gift of appreciation

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News

Standing Rock **ultimatum**

Water protectors prepare for winter as authorities insist they must evacuate

by Joshua Grant

For a movement rooted in peace, prayer and a people's connection to their ancestral lands, the Standing Rock Sioux's opposition to the Dakota Access Pipeline has continued to face a shocking amount of violence at the hands of the Morton County Sheriff's Department and other officers deployed from North Dakota and elsewhere in the US. In their defense of the pipeline's construction, policing costs have now topped $15 million and over 528 people have been arrested.

Gruesome photos and details of a major altercation on November 20 included attacks involving mace, pepper spray, rubber bullets and tear gas. Police also unleashed water cannons on the unarmed activists in sub-zero temperatures as they attempted to clear a blockade between the Oceti Sakowin camp and the pipeline construction site on a road that also leads to the state capital, Bismarck. One of the water protectors, Sophia Wilansky, was struck directly on the arm by a concussion grenade. She is now in hospital undergoing multiple surgeries to her arm, from which the flesh was stripped to bone.

A group known as the Water Protector Legal Collective has launched a class action lawsuit against the Morton County Sheriff's Department and other police forces present that night. The group accuses security forces of using excessive force and "employing impact munitions such as rubber bullets, lead-filled 'beanbags', water cannons and hoses, explosive tear gas grenades and other chemical agents against protesters."

On November 25, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers announced that on December 5 they would be moving to evacuate the resistance camp, just a day after a group of U.S. veterans planned to arrive to stand with First Nations and water protectors actively engaged in halting pipeline construction.

"Today we were notified by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers that on Dec. 5 they will close all lands north of the Cannonball River, which is where the Oceti Sakowin camp is located," said Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Chairman Dave Archambault II in an official release the day the news broke.

"The letter states that the lands will be closed to public access for safety concerns and that they will allow for a 'free speech zone' south of the Cannonball River on Army Corps lands. Our Tribe is deeply disappointed in this decision by the United States, but our resolve to protect our water is stronger than ever. The best way to protect people during the winter, and reduce the risk of conflicts between water protectors and militarized police, is to deny the easement for the Oahe crossing, and deny it now."

Since then, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has told the *Bismarck Tribune* that it "has no plans for forcible removal" of the more than 5000 people staying in the Oceti Sakowin camp, though remaining there past December 5 would be at their own risk and subject them to the enforcement of federal, state and local law. Omaha District Commander Colonel John Henderson says they are simply "encouraging" a transition of the camp onto Sioux reservation land on the southern side of the river.

Meanwhile, North Dakota Governor Jack Darymple signed an executive order for an "emergency evacuation" of the demonstrators, claiming that the harsh winter conditions could potentially endanger human life.

Organizers representing the original camp of the Sacred Stone, the Indigenous Environmental Network and Honor the Earth responded succinctly, stating "we will not be moved" and stressing the fact that the camp is located on unceded treaty land. "This state executive order is a menacing action meant to cause fear," said Archambault in response.

While the Standing Rock Sioux were calling on the Obama administration to intervene, in Canada, NDP MLA Wab Kinew made a statement in the Manitoba Legislature as he stood with a box of tobacco.

"I stand with Standing Rock," he said. "Traditional Indigenous people do not see Standing Rock as activism. For people who have heard the words 'mni wiconi' [water is life] since birth, this is simply answering the call of duty…. Though we may not all agree on how to fight climate change, we should all recognize the situation in North Dakota is a powerful lesson for us in how NOT to pursue reconciliation. In Standing Rock we see what can happen when development starts without the consent of Indigenous peoples."

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Continuing Our Journey
NIB Trust Fund

The National Indian Brotherhood Trust Fund is accepting applications for education programs aimed at healing and reconciliation. These funds have been made available from a surplus of the compensation allocated for former students of Indian residential schools, consistent with the terms of the 2007 Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement.

Applications are available to First Nation and Métis individuals, governments and organizations. Preference will be given to applicants who are former Indian residential school students.

Group applications are available online now with a deadline of January 13, 2017 at 5:00 PM EST. Individual applications will be available in Spring 2017.

For more information please contact the National Indian Brotherhood Trust Fund directly.

Toll-free: **1-888-268-0520**
E-mail: info@nibtrust.ca

www.nibtrust.ca

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Conseil Cri de la santé et des services sociaux de la Baie James

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Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay

JOB POSTINGS ᐊᐱᑎᔨᐊᓂᐦᐃᓂᐦᐅᑦ

Social Worker

Description: A social worker enjoys helping individuals, families, groups and communities to enhance their individual and collective well-being. He/She aims to help people develop their skills and their ability to use their own resources and those of the community to resolve problems. A social worker is a person who does design, guidance, counselling, implementation, analysis and assessment work in one or more social programs. Programs include Awash (0-9), Uschiniichisuu (10-29), Chishaayiyuu (30 and up), special needs, hospital and schools.

Work location: Various communities

Nurse in Maternal & Child Health

Description: The holder of this position works as part of an interdisciplinary team to support women and their child and/or children in order to strengthen families through pregnancy, birth and child rearing to promote the optimal health and development of infants and young children in the 0-9 age group. In smaller Community Miyupimaatisiiun Centres, she/he may have mandated roles in other community health programs and outreach programs.

* Must have a Bachelor'degree in Nursing and 2 years of experience.

Work location: Various communities

Senior Technical Assistant Pharmacy

Description: Person who, under the responsibility of the pharmacist, is mainly responsible for assisting the pharmacist by applying aseptic technique and following established protocols in preparing and packaging medication that require complex pharmaceutical calculations and specialized techniques such as injectable sterile preparations required for a centralized intravenous additive services (CIVAS) or similar system, or parenteral feeding and antineoplastic.

Work location: Mistissini/Chisasibi

Human Relations Officer

Description: Person who does design, implementation, analysis and assessment work in one or more social programs.

Work location: All communities

Pharmacist

Description: Reporting to the head pharmacist, the pharmacist will primarily be responsible for providing pharmaceutical care to patients in Cree communities.

Work location: Chisasibi

Youth Outreach Worker

Description: Person who participates to the identification of needs in a neighborhood or sector and informs and refers the clientele to the appropriate resources. She/he contributes to the implementation of community organizing programs. Two females and two males are needed in each community, from December 15 to January 8, from 6PM to 1AM, Thursday to Sunday.

Work location: All communities

For more available positions, please visit
http://www.creehealth.org/careers/job-postings

To apply, send your **cover letter and CV in PDF format**, mentioning the posting number, to **jobs.reg18@ssss.gouv.qc.ca**.
For more info call: **1-877-562-2733**.

In Brief

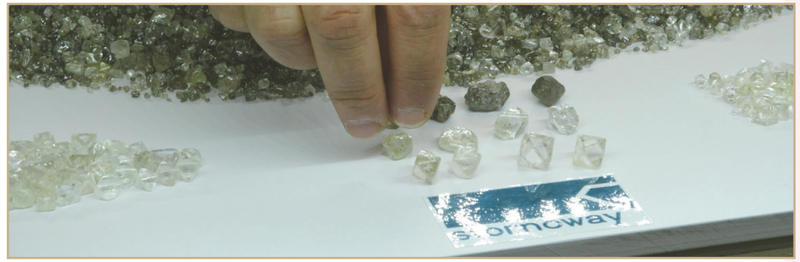
Suspected drug dealer nabbed in Wemindji

The Eeyou Eenou Police Force detachment of Wemindji arrested a 43-year-old male on November 26, following the seizure of 57.5 grams of marijuana separated into small baggies as well as other drug paraphernalia. The Wemindji police put the value of the seizure at $2300. The suspect was intercepted in a vehicle on the Wemindji access road where police executed a search warrant following an investigation that took place over the course of several months.

The individual was charged with drug trafficking, spent the weekend in custody and was held for a phone appearance on November 28. He was released later that day with a promise to appear in Wemindji court December 14 and an undertaking with conditions that he may not travel to Wemindji for any purpose other than court proceedings and must notify police beforehand.

Wemindji Police thanked community members who assisted in the operation.

Diamonds are a company's best friend



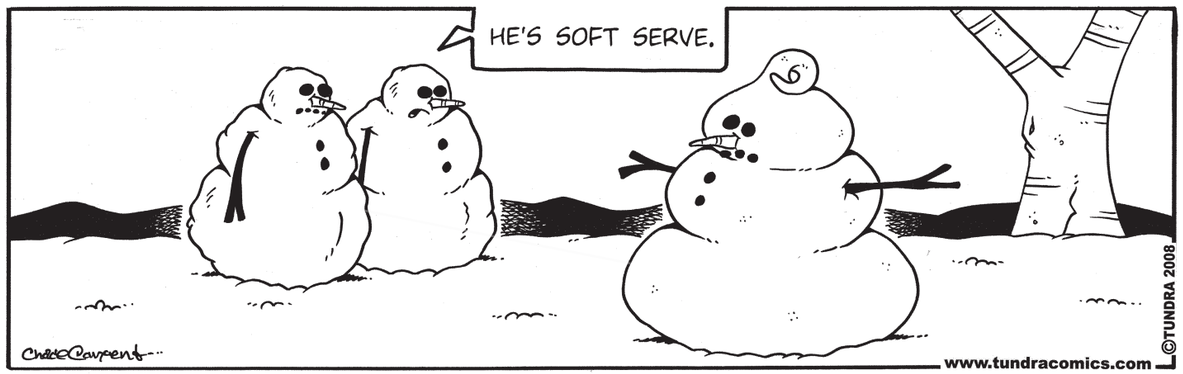
At an auction in Belgium, Stornoway Diamond Corporation recently sold $10.2 million of diamonds from its mine in Eeyou Istchee. To date, the company has invested $946 million at the Renard site north of Mistissini. The company says the next 14 years will see a significant return on that investment, both for Stornoway and the Cree Nation.

Apologies for **controversial screening**

The Montreal International Documentary Festival (RIDM) apologized last month for screening Of the North at last year's festival, a film comprised entirely of found footage that purported to portray the daily life of Inuit people.

"After a process of reflection, after listening, discussing and consulting with many people, including Inuit and members of First Nations, the RIDM recognizes that it was wrong to present the film Of the North in 2015," festival organizers said in a November 17 press release. "The RIDM officially apologizes for its mistake, and for its initial response to the criticism it received."

The festival acknowledged that the film offered a colonial perspective that "perpetuates racist stereotypes. The festival plans to continue the process of listening, dialogue, and inclusion, and will take steps to improve its consideration of problematic points of view during the festival's curation."



The Val-d'Or decision remains a **political storm for the Couillard government**

by Lyle Stewart

FALLOUT

"The message is loud and clear:

The justice system has failed these women and ***will continue to fail them.***"

- Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come

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Alternative Suspension

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ᐋᒥᔆ ᐧᐄᐦ ᒋᔅᒉᔦᐦᑕᒥᔆ ᒉᑳᓐ, ᒉ ᐋᔑᒥᐦᐄᑦ ᐋᓐ ᑳ ᐧᐊᐧᐁᔦᔦᐦᑕᐦᒃ.

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YMCA Alternative Suspension
Department of Justice and Correctional Services, CNG
Cree School Board

The contrast couldn't have been more striking.

The fallout from the Quebec crown prosecutors' decision not to proceed with charges against several Val-d'Or Surêté du Québec police officers continues to swirl around the province and across the country. But, for provincial Native Affairs Minister Geoffrey Kelley, it's time to move on.

Speaking to the CBC November 21, Kelley said it's time to "find ways to move forward."

The comment outraged several hundred people who gathered the next day at Montreal's Place des Arts to protest the lack of charges and the apparent indifference in Phillipe Couillard's Liberal government.

"We believe you!" chanted the crowd, many holding candles in the cold in a vigil organized by Idle No More Quebec, the Montreal Native Women's Shelter, Quebec Native Women and Amnesty International.

The November 18 announcement that six suspended SQ officers at the Val-d'Or detachment would not face any repercussions over 37 allegations of physical and sexual abuse touched off a wave of anger across the province.

"We're here to denounce the abuse that the women in Val-d'Or received at the hands of police officers, and to demand a public inquiry so that true justice can take place," Alana Boileau, of Quebec Native Women, told the crowd at Place des Arts.

The day before, a press conference by several Aboriginal organizations renewed the call for a judicial inquiry focusing on police relations with First Nations in Quebec. They included Quebec Native Women, the Grand Council of the Crees/Cree Nation Government, the Anishinabeg communities of Kitcisakik, Lac Simon and Abitibiwinni and the Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador (AFNQL)

Cree Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come emphasized the widespread support for the women who came forward with the allegations. "I believe you. We believe you. Even the independent observer and the director of criminal prosecutor are not denying that the events happened," said Coon Come.

"We're here to denounce the abuse that the women in Val-d'Or received at the hands of police officers, and to ***demand a public inquiry so that true justice can take place"***

“And the angel said to them, Be not afraid: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to tell people. Today in the town of David a saviour has been born to you; he is the messiah, the Lord.” *Luke 2:10-11*

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May the spirit of Christmas touch everyone in Eeyou Istchee.

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“Yet the government of Quebec continues to resist and ignores the overwhelming evidence of the need for a provincial judicial inquiry – a revision of how justice is administered for and to Indigenous populations. The message is loud and clear: The justice system has failed these women and will continue to fail them.”

Viviane Michel, president of Quebec Native Women, noted that the Liberal government made no secret of its lack of interest in improving relations with First Nations when it won the 2013 election. “Upon his arrival in power, the Couillard government put an end to the work that was already underway to develop an action plan on discrimination and racism towards First Nations,” Michel said. “Why? What are they afraid of?”

The example of swift action by the Couillard government after recent allegations of sexual assault against a Liberal MNA was brandished as a “double standard.” The government established a multi-million dollar plan to address rape culture, Coon Come noted. He also observed the calls for an inquiry after it was revealed that both the SQ

Ghislain Picard addresses the media in Val-d'Or

Finally, it appears Quebec is trying to find a way to save face on the calls for a provincial inquiry by **proposing a roundtable with Aboriginal representatives** to examine ways to improve relations with First Nations communities.

Alternative Suspension

Taapwaauchaayimiisu
Believe In Yourself

OUR PROGRAM

Taapwaauyimiisu (Believe in youself) program is a resource available for the schools in the three Cree communities, where the pilot project is currently being launched . We offer support to the students' ages 12 to 17 years old who, for various reasons, are temporarily suspended from 3 to 5 days from school.

The expression ***"Believe in yourself"*** is dear to our program as we want to send a strong message of empowerment and self-worth to our youth.

OUR SERVICE SITES

Taapwaauchaayimiisu program in Mistissini has officially moved in their new service site at the Family Resource Centre (Old Youth Centre). Thank you, Cree Nation of Mistissini, for your collaboration in providing space for our youth.

We would also like to thank everyone that attended our open houses in Waskaganish and Chisasibi.

Should you require more information, please contact the coordinator.

Tel: ***(819) 527-0407***

E-mail: ***Byourself@cngov.ca***

Alternative Suspension YMCA

Department of Justice and Correctional Services, CNG

Cree School Board

Eeyou Istchee James Bay Regional Government

Au nom de tous les membres du conseil du Gouvernement régional d'Eeyou Istchee Baie-James, nous vous souhaitons de passer d'agréables fêtes.

Que 2017 vous apporte santé, bonheur et joie.

On behalf of all the Council Members of the Eeyou Istchee James Bay Regional Government, we wish you Happy Holidays.

May 2017 bring you health, happiness and joy.

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Grand Chief Dr. Matthew Coon Come
Président / Chairperson

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Canada
Skins, feathers and fur

and the Montreal police had spied on journalists.

"The double-standard could not be more striking," said Coon Come. "Yet the Government of Quebec continues to resist and ignore the overwhelming evidence of the need for an provincial judicial inquiry – a revision of how justice is administered to and for indigenous populations."

AFNQL Chief Ghislain Picard said Quebec is kicking the issue under the carpet of the federal National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

"The reaction of the Couillard government is to sweep this all into the federal camp," Picard said. "What happened to the sacrosanct provincial jurisdiction of Quebec, especially in matters of policing?"

The organizations encouraged people to sign an online petition on the National Assembly website calling for a provincial inquiry. Petition 6389 notes, among other points, that "one of the most vulnerable populations in Quebec confirms their lack of confidence in police forces responsible for ensuring their security."

There are signs the Couillard government is feeling the pressure and searching for ways to calm the political waters.

On November 23, SQ Director General Martin Prud'homme announced that the Val-d'Or detachment would be reformed to include a focus on "community policing," and create a unit with a number of Indigenous officers. The one-year pilot project will begin early in 2017.

But Picard is sceptical, noting on CBC there is already a difficulty recruiting Native officers for First Nations communities and that proper funding will need to be found.

Finally, it appears Quebec is trying to find a way to save face on the calls for a provincial inquiry by proposing a round-table with Aboriginal representatives to examine ways to improve relations with First Nations communities. Meeting with Premier Couillard November 23, several chiefs – including Coon Come and Picard – discussed a new willingness by the Liberal government to create an as-yet undefined commission to look at the issue.

"Was there an opening? That was confirmed to us today," Picard told reporters after the meeting. "I don't think the impunity would have been the right response!"

Soon after, however, Municipal Affairs Minister Martin Coiteux was less than precise. "There was neither an opening or a closing of any door because we are all pursuing the same objective."

That, however, remains to be seen.

Former PM Paul Martin launches **Mistissini youth entrepreneurship program**

by Dan Isaac

YOUTH IN BUSINESS

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Former prime minister Paul Martin was at Voyageur Memorial High School in Mistissini November 25 to announce the launch of the Aboriginal Youth Entrepreneurship Program (AYEP). Voyager Memorial is the first school in the province to implement the AYEP, which is in its second year there.

AYEP is committed to closing the socio-economic gap between Indigenous peoples and other Canadians. Indigenous youth in the program are given the opportunity to get hands-on business experience and find new ways to thrive.

The program is designed to, "equip the youth with the tools to be leaders," said Cree School Board Deputy Director Serge Béliveau. "It helps them find a pathway that is uniquely theirs, and look at school as a real-life opportunity."

The program for Grade 11 students introduces Indigenous youth to opportunities in the business world and entrepreneurship. The curriculum is grounded in the requirements of provincial business programs but includes a large component of Indigenous focused content.

Students are encouraged to come up with a venture idea and work towards their goal while in the class. They're instructed on pitching their idea and presenting it in a professional context.

"It doesn't feel like a classroom, it's more like an office and we're all working together towards something," said Mistissini AYEP teacher Melissa Smithman. "Over the course of the program we become more like a family."

Participating students receive credits towards graduation, which is a big help for bright kids who don't fit the mainstream mold of education.

Department of
Justice and Correctional Services
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Need Help on How to Apply?

Contact your Local Community Reintegration Officer:

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Eastmain:	819-977-2400
Mistissini:	418-923-2661
Nemaska:	819-673-2400
Ouje-bougoumou:	418-745-2260
Waskaganish:	819-895-2126
Waswanipi:	819-753-2770
Wemindji:	819-978-3300
Whapmagoostui:	819-929-3796

If you have any additional questions or need more information, please contact the Correctional Services Regional Office in Val d'or at 819-874-2600 or by email at justice.valdor@cngov.ca.

www.creejustice.ca

"For students who don't feel challenged by regular classes, it's about building confidence and opening up their minds to a new world," Smithman observed. "You can be your own boss, you can be a philanthropist, you can analyze market trends and think critically about what you're doing and what you want to do next."

And though the program is grounded in business, the incorporation of Indigenous practices, ethics and examples are paramount in its delivery. For example, the teachings of the seven grandfathers are incorporated into the discussion on business ethics, the medicine wheel is incorporated into the Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) business

A SURPRISE ANNOUNCEMENT

The provincial and federal governments in partnership with the Cree School Board will spend about $32 million to build a new adult education centre and 40 living units to house employees in Mistissini. The announcement came as a surprise to attendees of the launch of the Aboriginal Youth Entrepreneurship Program in Mistissini on November 25.

"The development of basic public infrastructure is an important asset for Indigenous communities," said Louis-Hébert MP Joël Lightbound, who made the announcement. "The construction of an adult general education and vocational training centre in Mistissini is a prime example of the type of infrastructure that will help the Cree community of Mistissini support its education efforts."

While the CSB is still in discussions with Mistissini Chief Richard Shecapio and the band council over specific course offerings, the goal is to serve community needs. This adult education centre will differ from the Sabtuan Regional Vocational Training Centre in Waswanipi, which specializes in construction-related training programs, by offering programs in health, administration and technology, as well as construction and technical training.

One of the goals of the new centre will be "to recover students who have fallen out of the system," said CSB Director General Abraham Jolly.

"It is important to us that young people from First Nation and Inuit communities have access to education services that meet their specific needs and are consistent with their realities, in order to allow them to develop their enormous potential," said Quebec Native Affairs Minister Geoffrey Kelley. "Today, as a result of our announcement of investments for the Cree School Board, we are increasing their chances of building a future that meets their aspirations, so that they can contribute most effectively to the development of their communities."

The price tag for the centre alone is estimated at $16.7 million. The federal government will cover 75% of the costs, and Quebec will pick up 25%, as set out in the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement.

"Education is an important component for community development," said Chief Shecapio. "This investment will certainly allow easier access to more vocational programs that will assist our members in the advancement and development of their skills. Our leadership will continuously work with the Cree School Board to deliver quality education and services to our people."

MoCreebec Eeyoud

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year

PHOTO CREDIT: MICHAEL JOLLY

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Julie-Ann Jolly stands with former PM Paul Martin

analysis, and every case study that students research is based on the example of Indigenous businesses. Additionally, the guest speakers welcomed by the class are all Indigenous entrepreneurs, many of whom hail from the local community.

The program seems to be rubbing off on the younger students too. "Though the program was introduced by the Martin Family Initiative, the community has really taken it and run with it," said Smithman. "Just the other day a group of younger students scheduled a meeting with me because they want to start their own graphic design company. They're already thinking ahead so that by the time they're old enough to take the class, they'll have their own business to work on."

The CSB is now open to expanding the scope of the program to include governance. "While it gives the students confidence and skills to be the leaders of the future, expanding the focus to take it to a governance level would definitely benefit the community," said Béliveau. "We're really excited about the enthusiasm the program is creating in the students, and that it's opening their eyes to a potential that is limitless."

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Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year

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Internalized Oppression & Lateral Violence

by Eric House

Opinion

There is little research or documentation that brings awareness of internalized oppression and lateral violence. Few people understand the impact on those who live and deal with the stigma of their violent outbursts.

Despite the lack of material, our people have quietly (and defensively) acknowledged the fact that "we have stuff to deal with in our own backyard." This statement points to unresolved issues within ourselves and is widely recognized as part of our ongoing healing agenda. Given the decades of silence we have engaged in over the inter-generational traumas our people have endured, the statement seems to be just an echo and mere wishful thinking for a lot of us.

The only way we can find solutions is to uncover this negative force that works among our people. We have to bring it out in the open where it can be acknowledged and its destructive behaviour can be addressed. Many of our own people in authority are plagued by these harmful behaviours and react without thinking or using our people's wisdom. The situation has contributed to certain prevailing beliefs that limit our growth and development.

There is an internal adversary at work within our workplace environments. Its presence, though not always felt, may be powerful enough to influence our interactions and responses within our own world.

When these dynamics are present in the workplace, the person in a position of power is often seen as or identified as the aggressor, someone who is within the system. Workplace environments that contain these elements of oppression frequently affect such things as physical health, self-esteem and opportunities for professional advancement.

Work stress is manifested through raised anxiety, irritability, fearfulness, loss of concentration and demoralization. Also emerging are a high incidence of chronic fatigue syndrome, late-onset diabetes, hypertension, depression and other mental health difficulties. Although it cannot be definitively concluded that the latter effects are a direct result of these workplace difficulties, it could be argued that their presence in a large percentage of completed studies is of particular significance.

Internalized oppression and lateral violence are not confined to acts of physical violence. Every day, our people are forced to endure quiet acts of racism, bigoted remarks and job discrimination. These may not harm the body, but they do violence to our souls. We must stand against this quiet hatred just as surely as we condemn acts of physical violence.

Studies have confirmed these findings, concluding that this experience endured by our workers is a form of workplace oppression. The term deliberately addresses complex organizational dynamics that give rise to difficulties caused by issues of power and powerlessness and of the dominant and dominated.

To see these experiences as simply stress, scapegoating, bullying, harassment or personality difficulties, as some of our people do, is to do a huge disservice to an unexamined phenomenon

> To see these experiences as simply stress, scapegoating, bullying, harassment or personality difficulties, as some of our people do, is to do **a huge disservice to an unexamined phenomenon** and all its complexity.

CREE SCHOOL BOARD
Post Secondary Student Services

The whole team at the Cree School Board Post-Secondary Student Services extend their wishes to everyone this holiday season.

May you have wonderful times with your family and friends!

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WHAPMAGOOSTUI FIRST NATION

May the Peace and Joy of the holiday season be with you throughout the coming year.
Merry Christmas from all of us.

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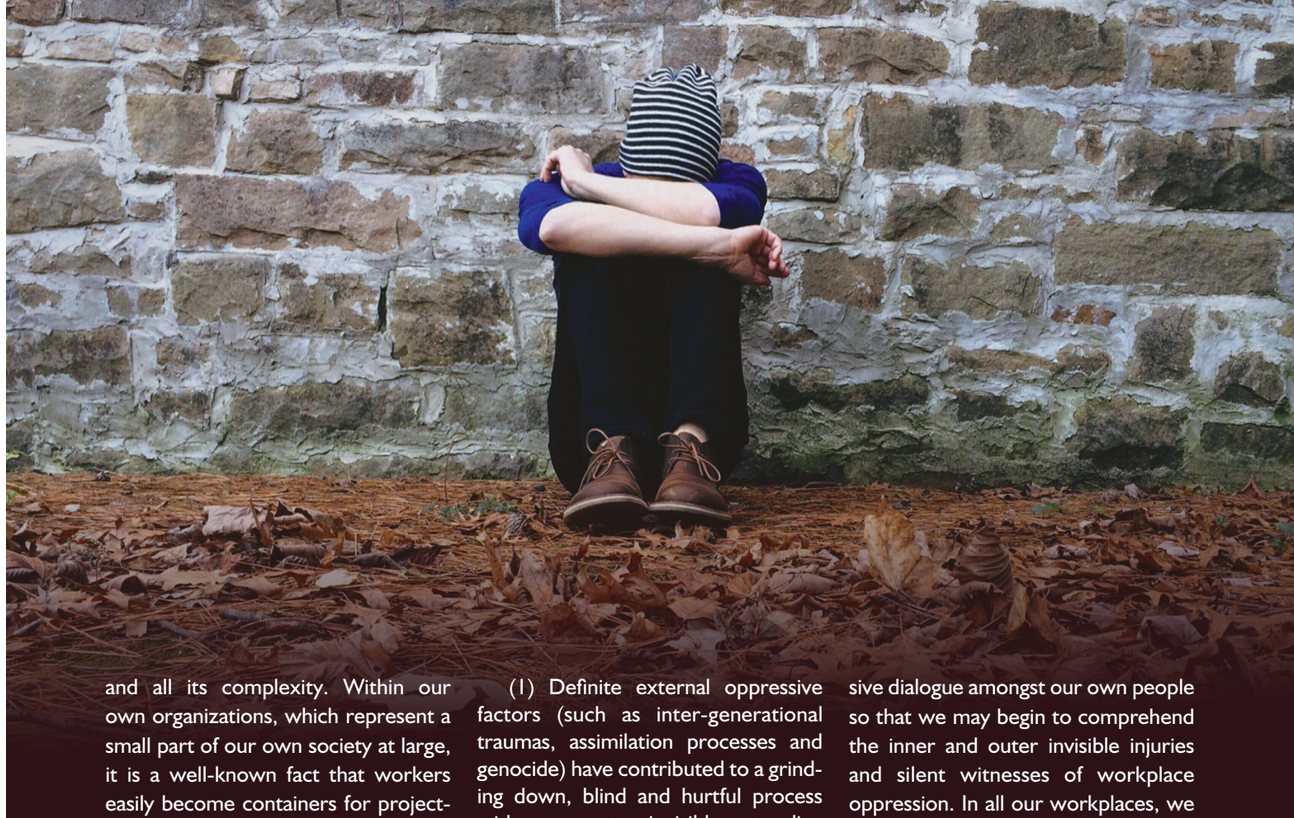
From **Chief Louisa Wynne, Deputy Chief John Shem**,
Councillors and all personnel of the Whapmagoostui First Nation.



and all its complexity. Within our own organizations, which represent a small part of our own society at large, it is a well-known fact that workers easily become containers for projected, unwanted and negative feelings. Within this process, aspects of the individual's internal trauma may hook onto external elements of oppression, thus providing fertile ground for the re-enactment of oppression in the workplace.

General findings

In brief, studies highlighted the following.

(1) Definite external oppressive factors (such as inter-generational traumas, assimilation processes and genocide) have contributed to a grinding down, blind and hurtful process with consequent invisible wounding to workers. (workplace oppression)

(2) The presence of an internal oppressor which, when stimulated, tended to merge with external oppressive situations. (internal oppression and lateral violence)

(3) Evidence of non-cultural competency initiatives that eventually leads to insecurity within our workplaces.

These complex areas need to be further understood with a more inclusive dialogue amongst our own people so that we may begin to comprehend the inner and outer invisible injuries and silent witnesses of workplace oppression. In all our workplaces, we need to look at all the incidents and instances with specific regard to trauma and wounding seeking wounding motives that hurt one another, and we need to find a better way to solve these dilemmas.

We need awareness, education, intervention and implementation to begin now, before we lose more of our own people.

Regional Radio Show on Housing
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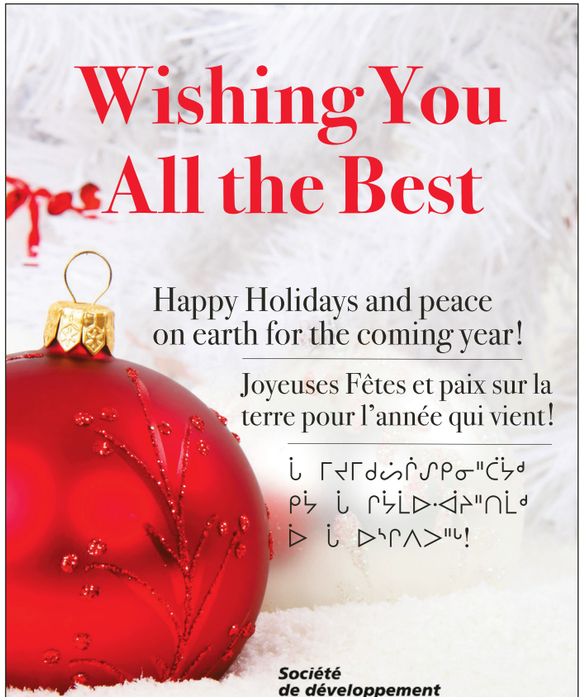

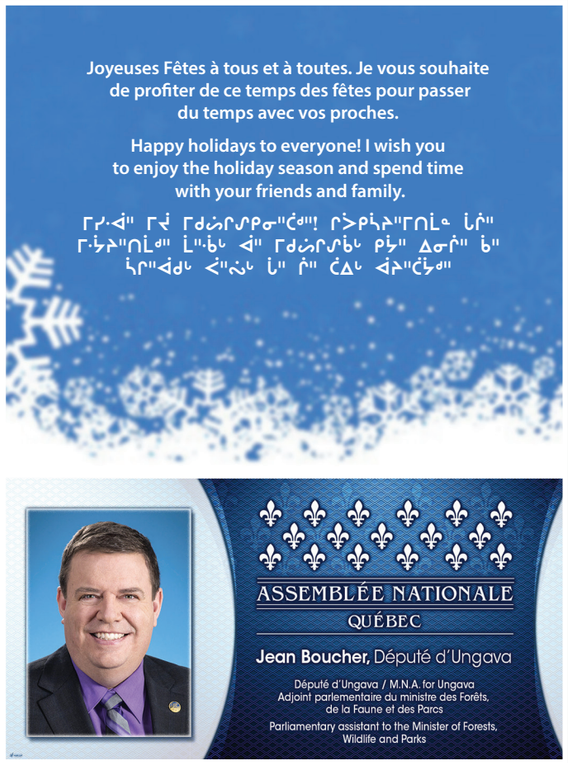
Joyeuses Fêtes à tous et à toutes. Je vous souhaite
de profiter de ce temps des fêtes pour passer
du temps avec vos proches.
Happy holidays to everyone! I wish you
to enjoy the holiday season and spend time
with your friends and family.
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de la Faune et des Parcs
Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Forests,
Wildlife and Parks

Cooking

Sweets for Santa and everyone else

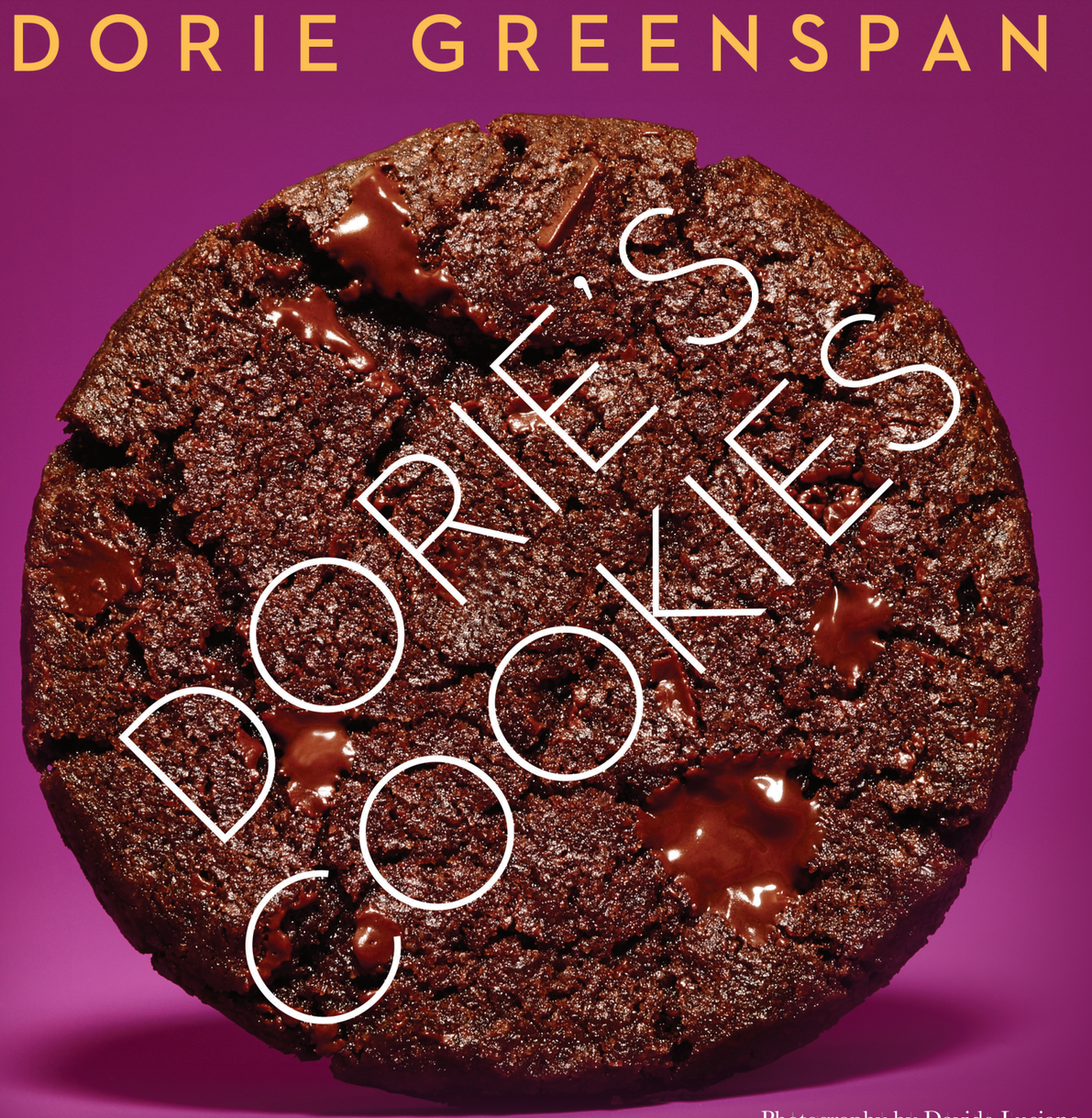
Dorie's Cookies guaranteed to satisfy the sweet tooth

by Amy German

When it comes to baking, Christmas is prime time for those who like to make cookies, bars, brownies and other special sweets.

Whether you are looking for a new take on an old classic or something truly special at your holiday event, some of the recipes in Dorie Greenspan's Dorie's Cookies are real gems. Plus, Greenspan is very detail-oriented when it comes to the techniques for each. Something that at first appears challenging can actually roll out pretty easily.

Dorie's Cookies is the perfect book for a cookie lover or someone just starting to bake, so why not give these goodies a try?



Photography by Davide Luciano

Double-Ginger Molasses Cookies

Classic molasses cookies are scooped, molded into balls, rolled in sugar and then pressed with a fork before baking, and you can make these cookies that way. Or you can do what I do: Mold them in muffin tins, which turn out more uniformly shaped cookies that teeter on the brink of becoming gingerbread cakes.

A word on crystallized ginger: crystallized, or candied, ginger is sliced fresh ginger that is cooked in syrup, dredged in sugar and dried. You can usually find it in the supermarket alongside other dried fruits or in the spice section. If the ginger isn't moist and pliable, steam it before using: Put it in a strainer over a saucepan of simmering water, cover and let warm and soften for about 5 minutes; pat dry, chop and use. If you can't find crystallized ginger, you can omit it or mix 2 tablespoons minced fresh ginger with 2 teaspoons sugar and let stand for about 10 minutes, until the ginger is syrupy.

Makes about 36 cookies

INGREDIENTS

2¼ cups (306 grams)	**all-purpose flour**
2 tablespoons	**unsweetened cocoa powder**
1 to 2 teaspoons	**instant espresso, to taste (optional)**
1½ teaspoons	**ground ginger**
1 teaspoon	**ground cinnamon**
¼ teaspoon	**ground cloves**
½ teaspoon	**baking soda**
½ teaspoon	**fine sea salt**
1½ sticks	**unsalted butter, cut into chunks, at room temperature** (12 tablespoons; 6 ounces; 170 grams)
1/3 cup (67 grams)	**sugar**
1/3 cup (67 grams)	**packed light brown sugar**
1	**large egg yolk, at room temperature**
½ cup (120 ml)	**unsulfured molasses**
1½ teaspoons	**pure vanilla extract**
1/3 cup (55 grams)	**chopped crystallized ginger or 2 tablespoons minced fresh ginger mixed with 2 teaspoons sugar (see headnote)**
7 ounces (200 grams)	**semisweet or bittersweet chocolate, chopped chip-size**
+	**Sugar, for rolling**

DIRECTIONS

Whisk the flour, cocoa, espresso (if using), spices, baking soda and salt together. Working with a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, or in a large bowl with a hand mixer, beat the butter and both sugars together on medium-low speed for about 3 minutes, scraping the bowl as needed, until fully blended. Add the yolk and beat for 1 minute, then add the molasses and vanilla, beating until smooth. Turn off the mixer, add the dry ingredients all at once and pulse the mixer until the risk of flying flour passes. Working on low speed, mix the dough until the flour is almost but not completely incorporated. Add the crystallized ginger (or the sugared fresh ginger) and chocolate and mix until the dry ingredients disappear into the dough and the ginger and chocolate are evenly distributed. If you've got bits of dry ingredients on the bottom of the bowl, mix them in with a flexible spatula.

Gather the dough into a ball, flatten it and wrap it in plastic. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours.

Getting ready to bake: Position the racks to divide the oven into thirds and preheat it to 350 degrees F. Butter or spray regular muffin tins or, if making free-form cookies, line two baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone baking mats.

Have a medium cookie scoop at hand. Alternatively, you can use a rounded tablespoonful of dough for each cookie. If you're using tins, find a jar or glass that fits into them and can be used to flatten the dough; cover the bottom in plastic wrap. Spoon some sugar into a wide shallow bowl.

For each cookie, mold a scoop or spoonful of dough into a ball between your palms, then turn it in the sugar to coat and put in a muffin cup or on a baking sheet, leaving 2 inches between each ball of dough. If using tins, use the jar or glass to flatten each ball until it almost reaches the sides of the cup. If it's free- form, press to flatten to about 1/2 inch thick.

Bake the cookies for about 13 minutes, rotating the tins or sheets top to bottom and front to back after 7 minutes. The cookies should be lightly set around the edges and softer in the center. Transfer the tins or sheets to racks and let the cookies rest for 15 minutes before unmolding them and/or placing them on racks to cool completely.

If you're baking in batches, make certain to start with cool tins or baking sheets.

Pumpkin Whoopie Pies with Dulce De Leche Filling

Ginger Chocolate Ganache

To make a ganache that you can use to finish the cookies, bring 2/3 cup heavy cream and four 1/4-inch-thick slices of fresh ginger to a boil in a small saucepan. Turn off the heat, cover the pan and allow the cream to infuse for 20 minutes. Return the cream to the boil, then remove the ginger and pour half of the cream over 6 ounces finely chopped bittersweet chocolate. Wait for 30 seconds, stir gently and then stir in the remainder of the cream. Dip the top or one side of each cookie in the chocolate and place on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Chill for 20 minutes to set the chocolate. Bring the cookies to room temperature before serving.

Storing:
You can refrigerate the dough for up to 3 days. You can also scoop out the dough, shape into balls and freeze the balls on baking sheets; when they're firm, pack them airtight and keep frozen for up to 2 months. Remove the dough from the freezer and let the balls sit at room temperature for at least 15 minutes, then roll in sugar and bake. The baked cookies can be kept in a sealed container at room temperature for up to 4 days. They'll get a little drier and a little less chewy, but that will make them even better for dunking.

Makes 16 cookies

INGREDIENTS

For the Whoopie Pies

1¾ cups (238 grams)	**all-purpose flour**
¾ teaspoon	**ground cinnamon**
½ teaspoon	**ground cardamom**
½ teaspoon	**baking powder**
½teaspoon	**baking soda**
1 stick	**unsalted butter, cut into chunks, at room temperature** (8 tablespoons; 4 ounces; 113 grams)
¾ cup (150 grams)	**sugar**
½ teaspoon	**fine sea salt**
1	**large egg, at room temperature**
1½ teaspoons	**pure vanilla extract**
½ cup (113 grams)	**pumpkin puree (not pumpkin pie filling)**
½ cup (120 ml)	**buttermilk, preferably at room temperature**
¾ cup (about 75 grams)	**fresh cranberries, coarsely chopped (if frozen, don't thaw)**

For the Filling

1 stick	**unsalted butter, cut into chunks, at room temperature** (8 tablespoons; 4 ounces; 113 grams)
1 cup (96 grams)	**marshmallow crème (or Marshmallow Fluff)**
1/4 cup (30 grams)	**confectioners' sugar**
1 Pinch	**fine sea salt**
1/4 cup (75 grams)	**dulce de leche, homemade or store-bought**

DIRECTIONS

Position the racks to divide the oven into thirds and preheat it to 375 degrees F. Butter or spray two standard muffin tins (do this even if the tins are nonstick).

To make the cookies: Whisk the flour, cinnamon, cardamom, baking powder and baking soda together.

Working with a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, or in a large bowl with a hand mixer, beat the butter, sugar and salt together on medium speed until smooth, about 2 minutes. Add the egg and beat for another 2 minutes or so, until creamy. Beat in the vanilla. Reduce the mixer speed to low, add the pumpkin puree and beat until it's fully incorporated; don't be discouraged when the mixture curdles — it will soon smooth out. Turn off the mixer, scrape down the bowl and add half of the dry ingredients. Pulse to begin the mixing and then mix on low, scraping the bowl as needed, until the flour mixture is blended in. Beat in the buttermilk. Turn off the mixer, add the remaining dry ingredients, pulse and then mix on low until you have a lovely smooth batter. Switch to a flexible spatula and fold in the cranberries. Don't be too thorough — it's better to have an uneven mix than to break the berries and turn the batter red.

Makes about 36 cookies

INGREDIENTS

1¼ cups (170 grams)	**all-purpose flour**
1/3 cup (28 grams)	**unsweetened cocoa powder**
½ teaspoon	**baking soda**
1 stick plus 3 tablespoons	**unsalted butter, cut into chunks, at room temperature** (11 tablespoons; 5½ ounces; 155 grams)
2/3 cup (134 grams)	**packed light brown sugar**
¼ cup (50 grams)	**sugar**
½ teaspoon OR ¼ teaspoon	**fleur de sel OR fine sea salt**
1 teaspoon	**pure vanilla extract**
5 ounces (142 grams)	**best-quality bittersweet chocolate, chopped into irregular bits**

DIRECTIONS

Sift the flour, cocoa and baking soda together.

Working with a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, or in a large bowl with a hand mixer, beat the butter and both sugars together on medium speed until soft, creamy and homogenous, about 3 minutes. Beat in the salt and vanilla. Turn off the mixer, add all the dry ingredients and pulse a few times to start the blending. When the risk of flying flour has passed, turn the mixer to low and beat until the dough forms big, moist curds. Toss in the chocolate pieces and mix to incorporate. This is an unpredictable dough: Sometimes it's crumbly and sometimes it comes together and cleans the sides of the bowl. Happily, no matter what, the cookies are always great.

Turn the dough out onto a work surface and gather it together, kneading it if necessary to bring it together. Divide it in half. Shape the dough into logs that are 1 1/2 inches in diameter. Don't worry about the length — get the diameter right, and the length will follow. (If you get a hollow in the logs, just start over.) Wrap the logs in plastic wrap and freeze them for at least 2 hours, or refrigerate them for at least 3 hours.

Getting ready to bake: Center a rack in the oven and preheat it to 325 degrees F. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone baking mats.

Working with one log at a time and using a long, sharp knife, slice the dough into 1/2-inch-thick rounds. (The rounds might crack as you're cutting them — don't be concerned, just squeeze the bits back onto each cookie.) Arrange the rounds on the baking sheets, leaving about 2 inches between them. (If you've cut both logs, keep one baking sheet in the fridge while you bake the other.)

Bake the cookies for 12 minutes — don't open the oven, just let them bake. When the timer rings, they won't look done, nor will they be firm, and that's just the way they should be. Transfer the baking sheet to a cooling rack and let the cookies rest until they are only just warm, at which point you can munch them, or let them reach room temperature (I think the texture's more interesting at room temperature).

Bake the remaining dough on cool sheets.

To everyone in Eeyou Istchee, we wish you and yours a wonderful new year filled with health, joy and peace.

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PROPAIR

World Peace Cookies

When we baked them at Beurre & Sel, we rolled the dough 3/8 inch thick and cut cookies with our rings so that they'd be uniform and fit into our signature packaging. at home, I bake them as I did from the start: I shape the dough into logs and then slice and bake the cookies as I need them.

A word on mixing, log rolling and patience: this dough can be different from batch to batch. It always seems to turn out well no matter what, but the inconsistency can be frustrating. I've found that it's best to mix the dough for as long as it takes to get big, moist curds that hold together when pressed and then knead if necessary so it comes together. When you're rolling it into logs, keep checking that the logs are solid. Again, the dough can be capricious and it may not always roll into a compact log on the first (or second or third) try. Be patient.

Danielle Ta'Sheena Finn poses for a photo during her visit to Mistissini

Miss Indian World

National competition comes to **Eeyou Istchee**

by Linda Shecapio & Johnny Dixon

Miss Indian World is a princess pageant that's held at the Gathering of Nations in Albuquerque, New Mexico on the last weekend of every April. Founded in 1983, the pageant is a five-day event, where young women representing their tribe or nation compete for the coveted crown. The pageant is not based on outward beauty, but rather aimed at the contestants' understanding of their culture, tradition, people and history.

Danielle Ta'Sheena Finn is the reigning princess of the Miss Indian World, which she won at the 33rd Annual Gathering of Nations. A law student at Arizona State University, Finn is the first member of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe to win the title. Chosen from among 24 contestants, she also picked up the Best Public Speaker honours. Her platforms are language preservation and suicide prevention.

Finn visited Eeyou Istchee during the annual general assembly of the Cree Native Arts and Craft Association (CNACA) in Waswanipi in October. Besides being the special guest, she was able to visit Mistissini and Oujé-Bougoumou. Wherever she went, Finn made an impact on the people, especially the younger generation.

One of the reasons Finn was invited was to instil an enthusiasm among the adults and the younger generation to participate in the upcoming Miss Indian World in Albuquerque.

Currently there are five groups working on having a regional Miss Eeyou/Eenou Pageant, which will take place in Oujé-Bougoumou on February 18, 2017. The five groups are the CNACA, Cree Women of Eeyou Istchee Association (CWEIA), Cree Nation Youth Council (CNYC), Eeyou Istchee Sports and Recreation Association, and Cultural Coordinators Working Group.

What we hope to see is each Cree community host its own local princess pageant. Hopefully the contests will be completed by the end of January and the contestants will be ready to compete regionally in Oujé-Bougoumou. The contestants and the overseers would use the same guidelines as the ones used at the regional level, which are the same as the Miss Indian World pageant.

We are planning to have Finn coach the contestants and the judges at the regional pageant. Plus, we are hoping she will be one of the judges.

As many may know, there have been annual princess pageants in most of the communities in the past. The problem was most were just one-night events and the reigning princess of the community was not involved in anything beyond the actual event. One of the new objectives is that the regional princess will be available for special events and functions across Eeyou Istchee and abroad, where she will represent the Cree Nation and inspire the youth to seek a better and brighter future.

Linda Shecapio is the president of the Cree Women of Eeyou Istchee Association and Johnny Dixon is the product manager at the Cree Native Arts and Crafts Association.

See criteria for entry online at www.gatheringofnations.com/miss-indian-world

The following are the benefits that the winner will derive from the competition:

- Commitment to her goals and aspirations;
- Protection of identity, culture and language;
- International platform for showcasing and promoting the people of Eeyou/Eenou, their culture and language to a global audience;
- Besides being an ambassador, she is aware of the realities faced by First Nations people and is able to speak about those challenges. She is not only educating herself but also others on these issues;
- Leadership, being proactive;
- Youth empowerment and a role model to young children and peers;
- Boosts self-esteem and confidence;
- Help reduce the level of social hindrances (such as alcohol and drug addiction, and unemployment);
- The pageant promotes the "inner-identity" beauty of Eeyou/Eenou Iskweush and our beautiful culture and language;
- Promotes self-respect and encourages her to honour her role in Indigenous societies and the essence of her centeredness in Indigenous families – as Indigenous women continue to encounter marginalization in Canada;
- Empowers her to tap into the issues that matter to her and voice them (advocate);
- Promotes transfer of knowledge to the youth and preserving our Eeyou/Eenou culture and language.

LIVING WITH GIANTS

Documenting the life of a young Inuk

Film Review by Joshua Grant

A great documentary leaves the storytelling to its subjects and captures the setting and context in which its characters live their lives without altering the landscape or inserting the filmmaker's own voice into the narrative. *Living with Giants* does all of this, and while it doesn't offer any solutions to the struggles faced by its Indigenous characters, it portrays their lives accurately and brings their reality to a mainstream Canadian audience.

Set in the community of Inukjuak (Inuktitut for "the Giant") on the northern bank of the Innuksuak River, Sébastien Rist and Aude Leroux-Lévesque's film is shot almost entirely in Inuktitut, with English sprinkled in, and was originally released with French subtitles as *Chez les géants*.

The film delves into the mind of 17-year-old Paulusie Kasudluak who lives with his elderly adoptive parents and takes care of them as part of his daily routine. Paulusie has adult responsibilities and aspirations of becoming a great hunter and providing for his community. He enjoys solitude, but loves his girlfriend Nikuusi Elijassiapik and his "bro" Allie, a longtime buddy.

The first 20 minutes of the film slowly show the ins and outs of Paulusie's life in Inukjuak. He cares for his ailing father, helps his mother around the house, repairs an ATV with Allie and spends time taking selfies and laughing with Nikuusi.

Lurking just below the surface, however, are inner demons and personal insecurities as Paulusie wrestles with a darker side of himself. The film changes pace when Paulusie lashes out in a fit of jealousy and his life is turned upside down. We see him arguing with his girlfriend over a guy she's been chatting with on Facebook as they drink smuggled booze around a bonfire at a graduation party.

In the next scene, Paulusie is in handcuffs, standing in the sun on the local airport tarmac with his friend Allie, using his phone and smoking a cigarette. Charged with assault, he is detained at a provincial prison in Saint-Jérôme while awaiting trial before being transferred to Amos.

Guilty and ashamed, Paulusie refused to allow the cameras to follow him during his months behind bars. Instead, we see close-ups of his personal prison diary which details the layout of his cell block, his regrets, his longing for Nikuusi and the frightening, violent dreams he has on a regular basis.

When Paulusie eventually gets bail he returns to Inukjuak. But he's no longer the same person, without his former spark and charisma and feeling at odds with the community he used to love. When he finally reunites with Nikuusi, Paulusie confesses that he would rather die than return to prison. The documentary's tragic ending is emotional and moving, adding to the film's authenticity by presenting the bitter truth.

While tackling complex social issues like violence, depression and suicide was not the original plan for directors Rist and Leroux-Lévesque, the duo did a spectacular job of capturing the essence of Paulusie's struggle and shifting gears in the face of the unpredictable. The result is something darker than intended but nonetheless compelling.

Paulusie Kasudluak and his girlfriend, Niikuusi Elijassiapik

Rist and Leroux-Lévesque did a spectacular job of capturing the essence of Paulusie's struggle and shifting gears in face of the unpredictable.

Aude Leroux-Lévesque

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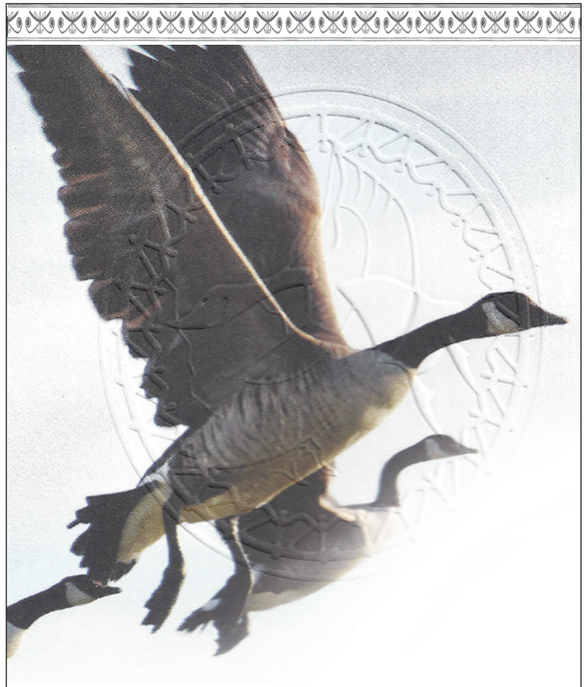
Paulusie's mother, Lucy Kasudluak

Sébastien Rist

The cinematography is breathtaking. Viewers get a glimpse into the inner workings of Inukjuak and the intimate dialogue highlights Paulusie's intrinsic connection to the land and the mythology of his ancestors.

Shots of Paulusie hunting seal and caribou from his boat and cruising around town on a four-wheeler with his mother and best friend paint a picture of what it's really like to live in the far north. Eerie scenes of Paulusie walking through the community in a wolf mask add an element of fantasy and folklore.

Chez les géants was originally screened at the International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam and RIDM, the Montreal International Documentary Festival. It garnered the Emerging Canadian Filmmaker Award at Hot Docs 2016 in Toronto and is currently screening at the Cinémathèque québécoise (355 de Maisonneuve E) in Montreal on Tuesdays (French subtitles) and Thursdays (English subtitles).



Merry Christmas
and Happy New Year

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Bonne Année

Cree-Naskapi Commission

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La commission Crie-Naskapie

Eeyou Istchee TV Host Tours the Americas, **Connecting with Indigenous Cultures**

by Dan Isaac

Konnected.TV is adding up the air miles, having taken the host and crew to Hawaii and across Latin America, including Chile, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru and Columbia.

The APTN documentary series follows the journey of Cree host Pakesso Mukash as he interacts with Indigenous tribes from all walks of life. The vision behind the show was to discover what Indigenous people across the globe were doing to celebrate, revive and protect their culture – the first season being focused on the Americas.

The experiences left the show's producer speechless. "There were times where Pakesso and I would just look at each other and be in total awe of the moment we were witnessing," said Eli Laliberté, who doubles as a camera operator.

The program's mission is to find the common thread that connects Indigenous people. According to

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Cree Nation of Mistissini
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"Even though **there's a strong will to see the cultures** and way of life survive, they are endangered."

Pakesso Mukash

Laliberté, there is a lot more that connects than separates us.

"The central role the territory plays in all Indigenous cultures is such a big common point," said Laliberté. "How your ancestors play such an important role and gives you such a sense of purpose and responsibilities in terms of preserving and carrying on a legacy. We were deep in the jungle, but there were moments when we all felt like we were back home."

Working on the show wasn't all positive, said Laliberté. "It's different emotions. It's not a holiday, we suffered with them too. But it felt like we were part of the family wherever we went, and that gave us such an awesome feeling," said Laliberté.

There was also a sense of urgency. "Indigenous people are in a state of survival," Laliberté pointed out. "Even though there's a strong will to see the cultures and way of life survive, it's endangered.

"There's a huge push to revive and celebrate the culture from the younger generations. And the idea was to get out there and share that," Laliberté said in closing. "How do they celebrate their culture? How do they revive it? How do they remember and bring back tradition? How do they preserve language for this generation of young Indigenous people? And lets show that to people in this country and inspire ourselves and see what we can learn from their example."

Pakesso Mukash declined an interview for this story.

The show airs on APTN Wednesday nights at 8 pm.

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Exodus

by Sonny Orr

Rez Notes

I'm calling around for people to give me a boost. But it's cold and most have left town. It's the annual pilgrimage to Val-d'Or for some all-out sports event featuring the up-and-coming, the best, the fastest, the oldest, the messiest, the loudest that all First Nations revel in – a hockey tournament. Local arenas are humming away with teams from every community, including the far northern cuzzins, the Inuit, in 24-hour gaming. As just about every adult age category – including cougar categories – is mustered up with imports cropping up to bolster the teams rosters.

Former NHLers occasionally pop up to fill in as the indiscreet goalie or on defence. Some grumble about it, but hockey fever is too strong in this universe and the games are underway. As the tradition goes, no alcoholic drinks are served and make for a very sportsmanship attitude. The tournament is nearly a rite of passage for young hockey players and a tradition for the seasoned veterans. After all, this tournament has been around for quite awhile.

For the ladies, broomball is the ultimate way to show off strength and take off the edge off. I hear that the best teams come from Eeyou Istchee, with Wemindji winning the world tournament a month or so ago. Nope, broomball is no longer a venting system, it is world-class action here folks! I'm proud to pronounce it on my resume, residing in the territory that breeds world champions!

The old timers are still up for entertainment value as the very visible puck is somehow missed or the aging goalie can't do his splits without having an emergency first response team nearby. Some tournaments end up taking out the spectators as fodder for the emergency room at the nearby hospital, as it tends to get a little rowdy come championship time or some favourite underdog team is badly losing so things can go sour.

Anyways, back to Abitibi-Témiscamingue, where the night never rests and the sun… well, you know.

A few days later, around five in the morning, the tired teams make their way to the elimination rounds before the final game featuring the top two teams facing off at centre ice. The puck drops and the crowd roars. As the game gets serious, the crowd boos and cheers wildly anticipating a goal that doesn't come. It's obvious who the favourite team is as the broomball teams do double duty as cheerleading squads to get the crowd going.

The buzzer goes off and it's a tight game with a goal for each team. The Zamboni drones around, clearing the debris tossed by the capacity crowd at the Centre Air Creebec. The puck drops again and 40 minutes and several penalties later, the game is still tied at two each.

It's back to the dressing room for a quick lace tightening and an impassioned speech from the coach before returning to the ice. The crowd is super excited and eventually the winning goal creates a time out for the desperate home team (and crowd favourite) as the coach pulls the goalie. The winning goal is in jeopardy and the crowd can't hold its excitement and no one can hear a thing over all the booing and cheering. I won't tell you the ending because you'd be reading this by the tourney ends and already know the outcome.

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Wishing everyone in Eeyou Istchee a
Merry Christmas & Happy Season's Greetings

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Under the Northern Sky

Prescription Drug Abuse

by Xavier Kataquapit

Somehow we have lost our way when it comes to health care and prescription drugs.

Many of us know someone addicted to prescription opiate drugs like fentanyl or hydromorphone. A survey done in 2012 indicated that 410,000 Canadians abused prescription drugs like opioid painkillers. Ontario alone had 2471 opioid-related overdoses between 2011-2014. Things have not been getting better over the past few years and, as a matter of fact, they have worsened to a great degree

As many as 30% of those people addicted to opiate painkillers got hooked on legal prescriptions for pain relief. There are all kinds of narcotic painkillers on the market. people believe the commonly prescribed oxycodone is the lesser of two evils because it is often combined with Tylenol or ibuprofen. In fact, Percocet, Tylox, Percodan and OxyContin all contain oxycodone. I know many people who were offered one of these painkillers as prescriptions from doctors or dentists. Some people had enough information beforehand to refuse these drugs, but many assumed that if they were prescribed by a doctor they must be just fine to ingest. I have also known many people who started this way and ended up tragically addicted and had their lives turned upside down. In the worst case scenarios, people died.

You might wonder why medical professionals prescribe these addictive painkillers so freely. Good question. Often, these prescription painkillers end up on the street and are sold for big profits. Some of the abuse by clients is expressly for resale on the black market. There is a big demand for these drugs as young people looking for a high get addicted to them and then are stuck in a world that spins out of control. They become helpless and unless they get help and treatment their lives are critically damaged.

The huge pharmaceutical companies that produce these opiates spend millions promoting them, while encouraging medical professionals to prescribe their products. They also have armies of lobbyists to pressure government authorities. The result is that these prescriptions are provided too easily. Once people are addicted to these drugs they can stay on them for a very long time and if they get cut off, they tend to turn to the street and pay large sums to feed their addiction. Many end up turning to heroin and similar drugs if they can't access their prescription drugs.

The drug companies are making billions selling these painkillers and their popularity has soared over the past 20 years. There were almost 22 million opioid prescriptions in Canada in 2016. The current crisis is even worse with the popularity of fentanyl. Once addicted, many turned to the black market. This drug is killing people across Canada.

This problem of prescription drugs is even more tragic in First Nations. Once people are addicted they will do anything to get their fix so they sell everything they have and spend all their time trying to figure out how to get enough money to buy more drugs. People lose jobs, don't take care of their children, get sick, commit suicide or overdose on the black market opiates.

Part of the problem stems from these drugs being too easy to get from a healthcare provider. Once people, who are already predisposed to addictions because of all kinds of historical abuse, are prescribed an opiate painkiller they are doomed. That is a major reason that the prescription drug epidemic on First Nations is so critical and becoming worse.

Fentanyl is the straw that broke the camel's back as the new synthetic type from China is killing so many people. I know that the current federal government is working on some solutions and I understand that our First Nation leadership is involved in trying to remedy this epidemic. They are up against that age-old problem as big drug companies continue to market, promote and sell billions of dollars worth of prescription painkillers and that is undermining the good intentions of our leaders. We need to do something about that.

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Thanks, and Happy Holidays!

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